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Point three

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The magazine of



Point three

the magazine of  **TOC H**

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Rev P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

The Gulf War

The editorial page offers the temptation to discuss the crisis in the Middle East. There is an enormous amount of media coverage and it is a haunting aspect of our daily lives. It therefore does not seem appropriate to add anything more, except to make a simple request that we should be united as a movement in a silent sharing of hope, prayers and love for our fellow beings in this time of human catastrophe.

Ruth Boyd

Campaign 91 - A question of Leadership

In a House of Commons speech in 1942, Winston Churchill, in his own inimitable way, pointed to differing views of leadership. 'I see it said that leaders should keep their ears to the ground,' he commented. He continued, 'All I can say is that the British nation will find it very hard to look up to leaders who are detected in that somewhat ungainly posture'.

There can be no doubt that any movement like Toc H needs leadership, or it will go nowhere. However much we restructure Toc H for its revitalisation, however much we refine our methods of work, however much we plough resources into it, we shall go nowhere unless enough people are prepared to risk offering leadership...and at all levels.

But what exactly do we mean by leadership? It is an age-old question. Is a leader a boss or a benevolent dictator, a persuader or convincer, a guide, prophet, an initiator or a bringer of new ideas and insights, the person out in front waving a flag or shepherding the flock from the rear, or the person elected to the Chair? One can reflect that the leader of the House of Commons is neither the Prime Minister nor the Speaker...so what exactly does THAT mean? Napoleon once defined a leader as 'a dealer in hope', which seems a rather more acceptable statement than the arrogance of Charles de Gaulle, who said, 'Men are of no importance. What counts is who commands'.

And so on. Images vary widely, as do expectations...and there is always the temptation to wish for some sort of benevolent dictator, as long as he or she agrees with one's own priorities and values!

One peculiar problem that besets our society today, and it sometimes includes Toc H, is that 'taking a lead' can sometimes be used in a

pejorative way. On a number of occasions I have sat with small groups on training weekends and asked, 'who is the leader of the group?', and everyone immediately seeks to thrust the crown to others, who in turn hotly deny that they are. In some way it is assumed that being a leader is to have gained illegitimate power. But yet the very words to offer, or to give, leadership suggest otherwise. To offer leadership is often about risking being the one to get it wrong, and to find oneself exposed, as well as taking on extra work and worry.

I believe we have to learn to welcome the offer of leadership. Those who stand for office in Toc H must be seen as people offering a contribution rather than seeking power. I am saddened when I occasionally hear members speaking who seem to view those who have offered to be on the Central Executive as, in some way, wanting to be bosses. That is very cruel. Here again it is because people have different views of leadership and assume that it is always about being a boss or being bossy. Yet one definition of leader - in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary - is of someone who 'guides by persuasion'. Another definition from the same source is that to lead is to 'cause another to go along with oneself'. Toc H only exists because many of its present members, myself included, were led into it, in that sense, by another person to whom we remain indebted, and yet those very people would never have seen themselves as leaders.

Campaign 91 is about the whole issue of leadership in Toc H. Already branches and groups will have received a questionnaire which, it is hoped, will help them to begin to think about these issues and will encourage individuals to realise that perhaps they, in some unexpected way, can take on a greater responsibility for leading Toc H ahead. Later in the year a series of Day Conferences will be taking place to develop the discussions. At the end of these days those who attend will be encouraged to tell those 'at the top' how they could do better, but will also be encouraged to consider how they themselves might give a lead. Finally there will be two residential conferences at which participants will talk it through in more depth.

The last thing Toc H needs is a membership waiting for a miracle leader to emerge...because we shall have to wait a very long time! The very strength of Toc H has always been that it has been committed to being a membership movement, and that implies a wide range of people accepting responsibility for its growth and development. Campaign 91 is to reinforce that and to encourage more people to see that they can, and should, give a lead in some way.

John Mitchell

Editor: Ruth Boyd

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Cover

Spring is coming!

photo: Donald Gough

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT. (Tel: 0296 623911)

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

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Point three is printed on recycled paper.

Desmond Bonner from Buckingham Branch sent in this cutting from his local paper, which we reproduce by the kind permission of the *Buckingham Advertiser*. The editor asked Jack Holland to share his story with *Point three* readers.

My Life as a Toc H Hospital Visitor

Jack Holland

One Sunday, while visiting my parents in the village where I was born, I was informed by my mother that an old friend and neighbour of hers was ill and had been taken to Winslow Hospital as a long-term patient. The year was 1958.

The old lady had only had one visitor so, at my mother's request, I went to see her the following Sunday. She seemed very pleased by my visit, as did the other patients in the ward. It was obvious that giving a little time to each patient for a comforting chat meant a lot to them and that's how it started. Hospital visiting became a large part of my life in the years to come - many years of visiting hospitals, homes for old people, group homes for handicapped friends, and local people who are sick and lonely.

Blessed are they with a cheery smile who stop for a chat for a little while.

For the next 20 years my Sunday afternoons were spent at Winslow Hospital, which consisted of five wards. As I live in Buckingham and don't own a car, my way of travelling to and from Winslow was by public transport, or a lift from a friend.

Most of the geriatric patients were long-term and our relationship grew along with my love for visiting. The nursing staff always made me very welcome and the patients seemed to look forward to my visits each Sunday.

In the summer we would sit out on the lawn together. I felt glad that I was helping to make their life more interesting. This is what hospital visiting is all about.

In 1977 rumours began that Winslow Hospital was to close. Meetings were held and eventually the rumours became true.

At first I was very much against the closure because it had been the home for some of the patients for a good many years and, being near Buckingham and surrounding villages and a popular and well run hospital, we would miss it very much.

I was very pleased that the mentally handicapped patients I visit still wanted me to come when they moved. They would always be my friends and as many had no relatives I was their only visitor.

At times I felt sad about it all, wondering which hospitals they would go to. Some of the patients had been there for some 30, 40 and, one lady, nearly 50 years, and were now getting old. When the move finally took place most of them

The good health I have always enjoyed has been a true gift from God to help me through all the years.

Each year, a kind donor gives Buckingham branch over 200 birthday and Christmas cards for distribution. I take them to the hospitals and group homes. It is a tremendous source of pleasure to me.

Whenever I visit a ward I first go to the sister's office and ask if there are any patients from the Buckingham area and if it is convenient to visit them.

When walking round the wards you must always be cheerful and a good listener. If a patient says he feels better, always agree. This helps to cheer him up and get well. Always ask the staff



Take a bow, Mr Holland!

TWO WEEKS ago, we asked who you would like to nominate for a mention in the New Year's Honours List, if you had the chance. Back came the first answer, from Mrs Susan Hutton, Chairman of Buckingham and District Mencap.

She wrote:

"We have no hesitation in nominating Jack Holland of Bourton Road, Buckingham — a member of Toc H and Mencap — for his wonderful record of hospital visiting since 1958, despite a major heart attack."

"Each week he visits Aylesbury, takes birthday cards, knitting wool and other comforts; feeds those who cannot feed themselves; visits those who no longer have visitors."

"All this is done in a most quiet and unself-seeking manner."

"The nomination comes from the committee and members of Buckingham and District Mencap."

Then came another letter

A FEW days later, another letter arrived, and guess who the writer wanted to nominate? That's right — Jack Holland.

Said Mrs E.M. Bull, of Christ Hospital Farnham:

"For many years Jack Holland has helped HUNDREDS of people, young and old, with visiting hospitals, the mentally sick and elderly."

"I knew him as a schoolboy at Maids Moreton, and even at that young age he was so willing to run to the village shop for anyone and would never accept anything for doing it."

And Mrs B ill says Mr Holland has never had a car, so he does all his hospital visiting by means of public transport.

moved to hospitals in the Aylesbury area. And so my Thursday visits began.....

I arrive at Stoke Mandeville Hospital at 9.00am. At 2.15pm I get a lift into Aylesbury town centre and then walk about one mile to Manor House Hospital. I visit several wards there, then cross the grounds to Tindal Hospital. I usually visit 25 wards at Stoke Mandeville and five each at Manor House and Tindal. The only time I ever miss going is when I have a cold.

A person without a friend is like a garden without a flower.

In 1975 I had an accident at work which resulted in my early retirement and my longest absence from hospital visiting.

before carrying out patients' requests such as giving sweets, drinks or even opening a window. Never sit on a bed; there are always plenty of chairs and it shows more respect for the patient as well as the hospital.

A good and understanding wife is a great blessing, and the welcome I receive from the staff at the hospitals, group homes and old people's homes, is satisfaction in itself.

The reward is knowing I have always tried to help someone whenever possible, as a Christian and good Toc H member, and I hope to carry on for a few more years.

Jack Holland is a member of Buckingham Branch. ■

Great War memories

William Lloyd MacLaren Francis was born in December 1896 and still lives in Oswestry, Shropshire, where he joined Toc H when the Great War had ended. He was a gunner with C Company, E Battalion, in the Tank Corps during the Great War. He wrote to the editor:

'I was a member of Toc H Oswestry and accepted office in the Methodist church because that, surely, is what Toc H was all about - helping others. I eventually became circuit steward for the whole of the Methodist Severn Valley circuit. Despite being a family grocer all my working life, I was rather poor at figures so I'm not sure how good I was! Telling you some of my war memories is one way of repaying my debt to Toc H at Poperinge, which gave me an uplift when I most needed it. We took our tank, 'Enchantress', loaded with Lewis machine guns, over the top on 31 July 1917, through the Passchendaele mud to St Julien onwards. We all returned safely but saw hundreds of dead men as well as horses and mules during our advance. No wonder I remember Talbot House; I went there 3 weeks later when I had almost lost faith in God and mankind. I have proved many a time when one almost loses faith, that when one recovers it - it is very much stronger. Toc H was like going from Hell to a little bit of Heaven.'



Milton Francis

Mac Francis

As we have found with all the stories in our Great War series, it is the human touches - humour, ingenuity, kindness and courage - that contributors remember and which give us a feeling of hope for humankind as well as a sense of inspiration. Private 'Mac' Francis is no exception. He was awarded the Military Medal on 20 November, 1917, for disobeying orders! He had evacuated

his tank, which received a direct hit, and had just joined a party of infantry. A German two-seater aeroplane flew low and fired a machine gun. 'Mac' retaliated with his Lewis gun and forced the machine to land. His bravery is described in 'The Tank Book of Honour, 1919':

'Throughout the action he behaved in a most excellent manner and displayed marked coolness.'

Mac's version is much more humorous: 'My officer, Lt. Nightingale, of Chester, ordered me to put down my gun, shouting "IT'S ONE OF OURS!" I disobeyed because I could see the German cross very clearly.'

'Mac' wrote to the Methodist Recorder last summer in response to their book review of Out of a Hoploft. We reproduce the letter here by kind permission of the Methodist Recorder: ►

Toc H memories

From W L M Francis.

With reference to the Toc H book review (Recorder, August 16), in August 1916 our tanks were in Olstoke Wood, about four miles from Poperinge.

One day I walked to Poperinge hoping to get a meal for a change from the thick army biscuits and corned beef.

Seeing a large house in the main square with a sign outside - "Abandon rank all who enter here" etc, I walked in, thinking it was a restaurant. I was surprised to see many officers and NCOs of all ranks, and quite a few privates like me.

Instead of saluting officers, it was a shaking of hands all round.

I may have had only a cup of tea and a cake, but I was FULL of happiness. It was such a friendly place and I remember it with gratitude. — W L M Francis, MM, 3 Queen's Close, Oswestry, Shropshire. (Aged 93 and a regular reader of the MR for over 50 years.)

Mac Francis has enough material to fill a book, but the adventure we tell here is the one he would most like to share with *Point Three* readers, describing it as 'real Toc H material'.

THE LADY IN PARIS

In 1917, my pal and I were given three days leave in Paris. We drew about nine months back army pay, were issued with new uniforms, and after a journey by train arrived at the Gare de Nord, Paris. I was anxious to enjoy the delights of this lovely city, and was quickly out onto the platform. To my amazement I was immediately 'accosted' by a lady. She was tall, dressed very elegantly in black, and about 30 years of age. She was obviously French and spoke English fluently.

'Are you a British soldier?' she asked. 'Yes, Madam', I replied. 'An officer?' 'No Madam. My friend and I hold the lowest rank in the army'. 'That is excellent; will you allow me to show you around the city?'

I agreed at once but my pal was a bit dubious! Knowing we must be hungry after our journey, she took us to a cafe where we had an excellent meal.

Our lady friend appeared to be too excited to eat or drink, but after many weeks on 'bully beef' and thick army biscuits we made up for her! Afterwards she took us to see many famous buildings and churches. Then it was time for lunch. We entered a very large hotel, somewhere near the centre of Paris, where we saw dozens of high-ranking officers entering and leaving. It was just like a recruits' saluting practice all

over again! We must have saluted over 100 in the course of about four minutes.

This place of course was out of bounds to all ranks other than officers, but in we went, led by our lady friend, to a vast dining room where she spoke to a waiter in French, which we did not understand. He waved his arms and refused a table. She went to another, still the same response. Then the head waiter came over and I got the impression that they knew one other. He took us down the aisle, on each side of which were scores of 'Top Brass Hats' - Colonels, Brigadiers, a few Generals: British, French, Australian, New Zealand. You should have seen their faces as two army privates passed them! We were with a lady, so no questions could be asked. I remember the hundreds of flowering plants all round the place, and seeing all the rich food in abundance. When our troops at the Front often had to make do with army biscuits (frequently stewed) for days on end, I felt such lavishness was not quite right in war time.

But three or four courses later, with the correct wine for each chosen by our hostess, we felt on top of the world. When she left the table my pal said to me, 'We are two fools, this one meal will cost us six months pay!' My reply was, 'We

When we came down for breakfast next morning we asked the manager for our bill. To our considerable surprise he said, in broken English, 'No pay. Same room tonight. All paid'.

And there she was waiting for us, at 10 am as arranged. We toured Paris from end to end and it seemed that about every two hours we two army privates were enjoying delicious meals. She must have thought we were 'two hungry bears' judging by the quantity we got through!

Our time together passed very pleasantly. At about 6pm she explained that she had a special family gathering to attend, but that first we would go to a quiet hotel, where she had something to explain to us. At the earliest opportunity I broached the subject of payment and almost her exact words were: 'You talk about payment, my answer to that is that I will NEVER be out of YOUR debt...'

She went on to explain that her husband, a captain in the French army, had been killed in action three months before. Theirs had been eight years of perfect harmony in married life. She had taken it to heart so badly that she had contemplated taking her life, and her mother had suspected as much and had informed their Father Priest. He had

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at
Grosville
1918



Mac
Francis
is
arrowed

enjoyed it; we may not be alive to ever enjoy another like it'. (He was killed in action three weeks later).

Our friend rejoined us, and we agreed that she would see to all expenses because she spoke French and that we could settle at the end of the day.

Later that afternoon she took us to an old chateau not very far from Paris. I think this might have been the palace of Fontainebleau. There we had another delicious meal. We then went back to the city and she courteously showed us round yet more places of interest.

It was now getting late and we were asked if we had booked our hotel for the night. When we said we hadn't had an opportunity to sort that out, she took us to an hotel on the outskirts of Paris, saw the manager on our behalf, then bade us goodnight with the understanding that she would like to meet us outside the hotel at 10am next morning. Of course we were more than happy at the idea, thanked her most heartily and bade her goodnight ourselves. There had been no discussion of our financial obligation to her but we assumed it would be sorted out next day.

castigated her, saying that she should be ashamed of herself and that she was very ungrateful to God who had granted her so many happy years of marriage. He said that she should follow his orders, which were that the very next morning she should meet the British troops' leave train at 5.30 and approach the *first* British soldier she saw and offer to show him around the city. She was told not to approach an officer, however, lest he mistake her intentions.

She explained further. 'When you agreed to my offer, it was as if a load was taken off my mind. That was why I seemed relieved that you weren't officers. Now I leave you with blessings on your heads. I am a changed woman and have you two to thank for everything. I can now face the future with the utmost confidence'.

As we parted, we gave her a salute that any guardsman could be proud of.

My only regret is that I didn't have enough presence of mind to ask her for her name and address. I would have dearly loved to have written to her after the war and have often wondered what happened to her in life. ■

Buddhism



A fool seeks for the Buddha,
not for Mind

A sage seeks for Mind,
not for the Buddha.

These words do not mean that the writer has no faith in Buddhism, but rather that the Buddha - here the word is used to mean Absolute Reality - *is* Mind, other than which nothing has any real existence.

What is Buddhism?

Maurice Walshe

If one word could sum up the meaning of Buddhism in theory and in practice, that word might well be Selflessness. Buddhism is essentially a way of practice rather than of belief. There are naturally certain basic principles in the Buddhist teaching, but it is their application that is important. It is probably the pragmatism of Buddhism that makes an especial appeal to the Western mind. There are many different schools of Buddhism in the East, but their superficial variety has in the past misled Westerners into imagining a far greater fundamental diversity than really exists. The colourful symbolism of the Tibetan school and the enigmatic pronouncements of Japanese Zen may seem more attractive to some than the unadorned simplicity of the Theravada school prevalent in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand, but it is this school that claims with some justice to have preserved the original teachings in their purest form.

The founder of Buddhism was the North Indian prince Siddhattha Gotama, whose dates are usually given as ca. 563-483 BC. His father was a vassal ruler under the great King of Kosala, and Siddhattha's birthplace was just over the present-day Indian border in Nepal. He was brought up in great luxury but spent his later life wandering about the Ganges valley, then the most civilised part of India.

He rejected his privileged background because he was overcome with the sorrows of life and decided to seek a solution to the sufferings of the world. Following an already ancient tradition, he 'went forth from the household life into homelessness' and became the disciple in succession, we are told, of two famous spiritual teachers. They taught him how to attain very high and blissful states of mental concentration, but could not show him the way to final liberation from life's besetting sorrow. He left them and set out to find his own solution, together with a small band of like-minded ascetics.

For six years he is said to have practised excruciating austerities, but these also failed to lead to the goal he sought. To the regret of his five followers, he then abandoned these practices, took some nourishment and sat down at the foot of a pipal tree at the place now called Buddha Gaya in Bihar, determined not to move from this spot until enlightenment

should dawn. Traditionally it is believed that it was on his 35th birthday, at the full moon of May about 528 BC, that Siddhattha Gotama became the Buddha - the Awakened or Enlightened One.

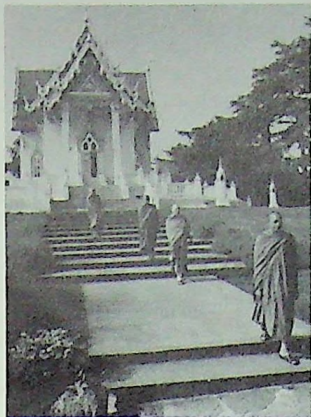
Breaking through the last veils of illusion, Gotama penetrated with his mind to the realisation of the nature of sorrow (*dukkha*), its cause, its cessation and the way leading to that cessation. That way was the middle path between indulgence in the pleasures of the senses and extreme austerity, neither of which paths, as he knew from experience, led to the goal. This was the gist of his first sermon, preached to his erstwhile five disciples in the deer park at Sarnath near Varanasi.



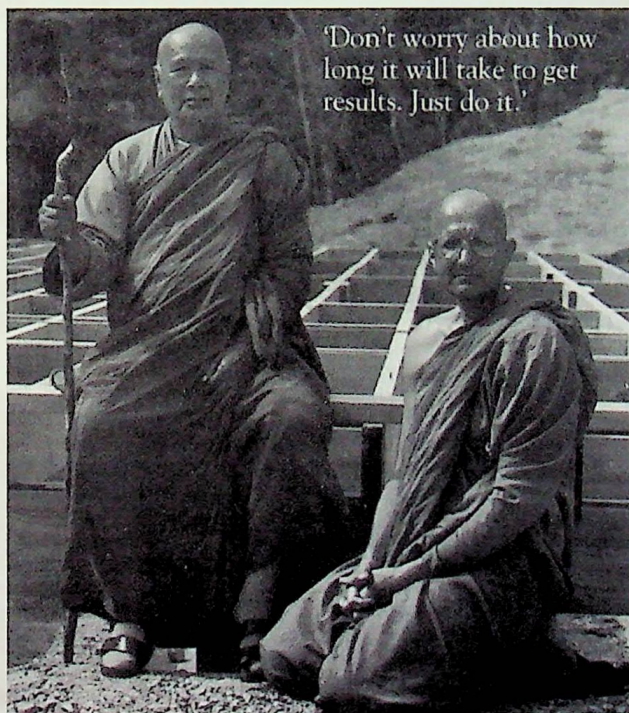
They had at first refused to welcome him, but the irresistible power and majesty of his presence as the Enlightened One overcame all their resistance. When he had finished talking the Eye of Truth was opened in one of them, Kondanna, and he understood that 'whatever comes into being is bound to pass away': the first step on the path to full enlightenment - a state which was soon achieved by all five of his followers. Then there were just six Arahants (enlightened people) in the world: the Buddha - who had found the way for himself, and his five followers, who had gained it under his guidance. For the next 45 years Gotama wandered in the region of the Ganges valley expounding his teaching to many thousands of people, some of whom abandoned everything to become ascetics like himself, while others, including kings, princes and Brahmins, as well as Ambapali, a leading courtesan, became his devoted lay-followers who provided alms for the support of his *Sangha* or community. The yellow-robed order of Buddhist monks (soon to be followed by an order of nuns) was born, and flourishes to this day. The order has now spread beyond the confines of Asia to Britain, America, Australia and elsewhere.

Buddhism is not a revealed religion like, for example, Christianity: the Buddha was a human being who found the truth for himself, though having found it he can be said to have become in a sense superhuman, but he was not a creator god or the emissary of one - in fact no such concept exists in Buddhism. The problem which Christians call the problem of evil therefore does not pose that tormenting question: 'Why does God allow evil?' Instead of evil, Buddhists speak of suffering (*dukkha*), and its cause is inordinate desire, craving and attachment to all sorts of things which, being impermanent and essentially empty, can never give us real

satisfaction. Once we truly and fully realise that, as Kondanna perceived, 'whatever comes into being is bound to pass away', we can cease to invest our emotions in transient things - and that is the first step towards gaining enlightenment.



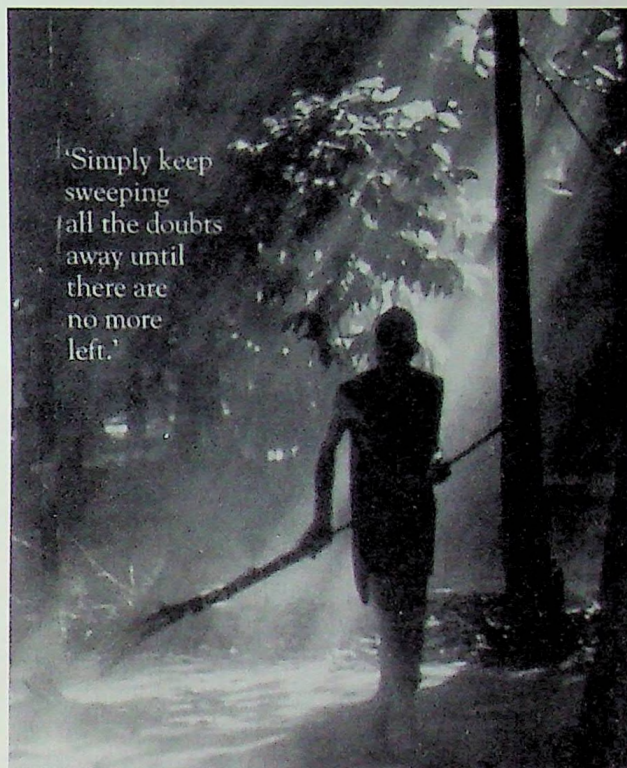
Freud has taught us that we can overcome some of our troubles by learning to understand and accept our unconscious motivations. The Buddha discovered something similar, except that it went very much deeper. The seeing, when it is deep enough, *is* the cure - and that is the whole secret of Buddhist meditation. Things are impermanent and can therefore never give permanent satisfaction. These are two of the three so called marks of existence: *anicca*, 'impermanence', and *dukkha*, 'suffering'. But the Buddha also said, 'There is, monks, an Unborn, Unbecome, Uncreated, Unconditioned. If there were not this Unborn ... then there would be no deliverance here visible from that which is born, become, created, conditioned'. It is the realisation of this Unborn that is the goal of Buddhism, that deliverance for which the name is Nibbana or Nirvana (the Pali *Nibbanna*, found in the earliest recorded scriptures, is probably closer to the speech-forms used by the Buddha than the more familiar Sanskrit *Nirvana*).



'Don't worry about how long it will take to get results. Just do it.'

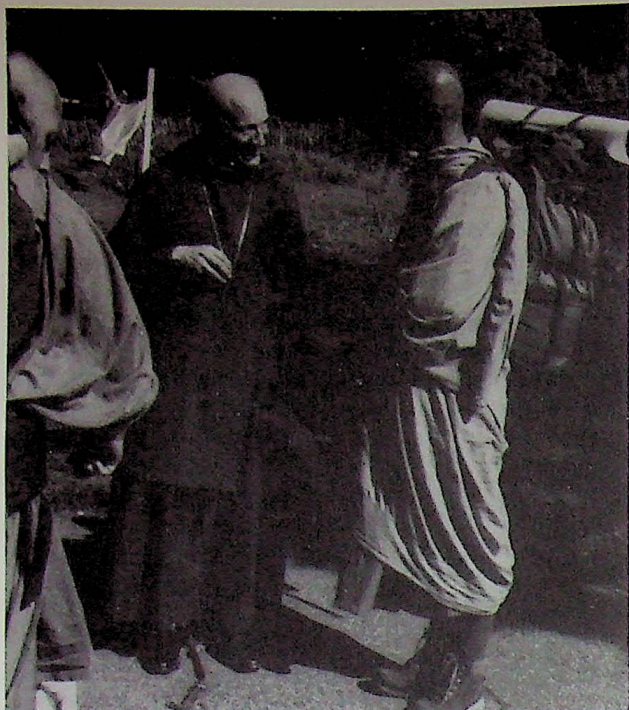
Nibbana is something that cannot be described or clearly understood by the ordinary unenlightened mind - but it *can* be realised by the process of awakening or enlightenment. We can best think of it as the peace that passes understanding. It is literally 'out of this world' if by *world* we mean *samsara*, the weary round of birth-and-death in which we are trapped. For this life is only one of a series: as long as we remain unenlightened we are continually reborn again and again, now in a happier sphere, now in a less happy condition, depending on our own deeds (*karma* or *kamma*, i.e. the deliberately willed actions which, for better or for worse, we have performed). There is more evidence for the truth of this doctrine than many people realise. And it certainly seems a fair way for the universe to operate - though some might say, 'How do we know the universe *is* fair?'

I have mentioned the first two of the three marks of existence: impermanence and suffering (or imperfection). The third is that selflessness or impersonality I mentioned at the beginning (hence the three marks are sometimes called the 'three imps': impermanence, imperfection, impersonality).



'Simply keep sweeping all the doubts away until there are no more left.'

All things, including ourselves, are fundamentally impersonal, without 'self-nature'. All the parts of our body are impermanent and constantly changing, and the same applies to all the various factors that go to make up what we call 'mind'. Thus 'I' am a process rather than a thing, a verb rather than a noun, a continuity rather than an identity, impelled by the force of illusion-fed craving which is so powerful that after death it continues somehow, somewhere, in a new life-form. And this goes on indefinitely unless and until insight brings liberation. This, in brief, is the explanation of how there can be rebirth without a soul-entity to be reborn. What is reborn is nothing but the *illusion* of such an entity. But it is a very powerful illusion and difficult to eradicate. 'Reincarnation' is the Buddhist view of such a soul-entity that undergoes repeated rebirths. ►



West meets East
The Bishop of Lewes and the Ven. Ajahn Anando

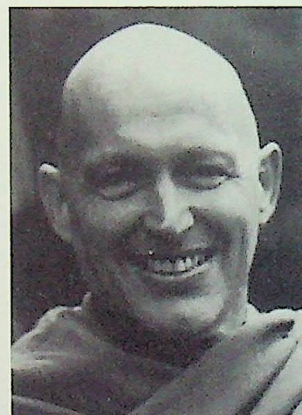
The philosophical concept of non-self (*anatta*) may be difficult to grasp, but as the basis for a practical ethic of selflessness its importance is obvious. The ethical side has always been considered of very great importance in Buddhism. For lay Buddhists the code is a simple one of five precepts or 'rules of training', which are not commandments from the Buddha or any deity, but rules which one voluntarily tries to observe: 'I undertake the rule of training in refraining from: 1) taking life, 2) theft, 3) sexual misconduct, 4) false speech, and 5) getting drunk or drugged'. All of these injunctions are difficult to keep but one should do one's best. Monks and nuns have, naturally, a great many more rules to observe, including strict celibacy, not handling money and not eating after midday.

The path to be trodden by the aspiring Buddhist is called the Noble Eightfold Path which, however, can be subsumed under the three headings of Wisdom, Morality and Meditation. The preliminary degree of wisdom necessary for starting on the Path involves a recognition of the fact of *kamma* (*karma*), cause and effect, while the ultimate flowering of Wisdom is of course the breakthrough to enlightenment, which can only come after the Path has been trodden to the very end. True Buddhist meditation is only possible on a basis of strict morality, which involves not only a degree of self-restraint but especially the development of loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings. This does not, of course, mean that we have to be morally perfect before we can meditate - otherwise we should never get started at all - but it does mean that we must make a serious effort to behave wisely and compassionately, even towards ourselves. Any claim that Zen or any other form of Buddhism is unconcerned with morality is specious. The meditation on loving-kindness is widely practised among Buddhists and is a most beautiful and salutary exercise.

The Theravada school, now found in South East Asia, may be the closest of any to the original teaching. This was brought to Sri Lanka in the time of the Emperor Asoka (ca 250 BC), and spread from there to Burma and beyond. In India, other schools arose, most of which came to be called collectively the *Mahayana* or 'Greater Vehicle' (the opposite term *Hinayana* or 'Lesser Vehicle' originally applied not to the Theravada but to certain now extinct schools within India). Their principal feature was the development of the idea of the Bodhisattva who should forgo the bliss of Nirvana in order to bring all sentient beings to enlightenment. Even this idea was not totally new but rather a shift in emphasis, as were other alleged doctrinal innovations. When Buddhism reached Tibet it assumed some special forms, as likewise it did on its journey through China to Japan. The uniqueness claimed for the Japanese Zen (Chinese Ch'an) school has been much exaggerated, and in particular the idea that Zen lacks discipline.

There are no reliable figures for the number of professing Buddhists in Britain, though the number is rapidly increasing. The Buddhist Society, with fine premises at Eccleston Square in London, has been a focal point for British Buddhists since its foundation by Christmas Humphreys in 1924 and still remains important as a 'non-denominational' centre. And there are now local groups in practically every part of the British Isles. There are also branches of the Buddhist *sangha*, or order, of different schools, in various places.

The attempt to establish an eclectic westernised 'order' has been rendered increasingly irrelevant with the firm establishment of genuine branches of the authentic Eastern tradition, which are widely respected for their dedication and discipline. The biggest of these centres, in the Theravada tradition as taught in north-east Thailand, is that based at Amaraviti, Great Gaddesden, Herts. under its highly respected American abbot, the Ven. Ajahn Sumedho, a pupil of the Thai teacher, the Ven. Ajahn Cha. This is perhaps the strongest and most rapidly growing branch of British Buddhism, with two main centres and two branch monasteries in England, as well as offshoots in New Zealand, Switzerland and Italy. ■



Ven. Ajahn Sumedho,
Abbot of Amaraviti
Buddhist Centre,
Great Gaddesden, Herts.

Buddhism - Glossary, Variant Spellings

Many Buddhist terms are found in two slightly different spellings (e.g. *Nibbana*, *Nirvana*). This derives from the fact that when the scriptures were finally written down, different dialects were used in different areas of India. In the north, the language of the Buddhist records is close to Sanskrit (*karma*, *dharma*, *Siddhartha Gautama*, etc.), whereas in the south the Pali dialect - in which a most important Buddhist collection was recorded in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) - is much less 'Sanskritised' (*kamma*, *dhamma*, *Siddhattha Gotama*, etc.). The Sanskrit spellings are perhaps more familiar to western readers than the Pali forms; however, the two are obviously related and the variants easily recognised.

I Was a Buddhist Monk

Maurice Walshe

On 9 July 1989, at the age of 77, I became a Buddhist monk for three months. I was ordained at Chithurst Forest Monastery in West Sussex, along with two younger men who were going into the order for life - though if they changed their minds they too could leave at any time they liked. There are no life vows. The period from July to October/November is the rainy season in India and in the old days monks, who wandered freely round the countryside for the rest of the year, spent at least three of those four months living in one place. This gave them an opportunity for recollection and instruction.

This system, established in Thailand, was brought to England and is practised at the four monastic centres established by the English Sangha Trust - though owing to local conditions the period of intensive meditation has been transferred to January/February, during which time the monasteries, normally open to visitors, are closed and external activities suspended.

Having been an active Buddhist and supporter of the Trust for over 30 years, I felt that, being now a widower, I ought to experience at least a little of the monastic life from the inside. I should just add that I am perhaps fitter than average for my age, but I think the life is perfectly supportable for a person (of either sex) of almost any age who is reasonably healthy - and even, with some allowances, for some who are less than totally fit. The daily routine is simple and, as in most monasteries of any religion, slightly monotonous.

Early rising at 4am most mornings with no meals after midday are perhaps the principal 'hardships'. There are morning and evening sessions of chanting and meditation. The main meal of the day is at 10.30 am and the afternoons are occupied with work, which may be anything from heavy manual labour (for the young and tough) to office or library work. There are numerous lay visitors especially at weekends, often bearing gifts, and throughout the week it is the laity who supply the meals. Without them the community could not exist. Once a week there is a late-night sitting till midnight, or, at the full and new moons, 3 am. The mornings before and after these, we can 'lie in' until 6 am.

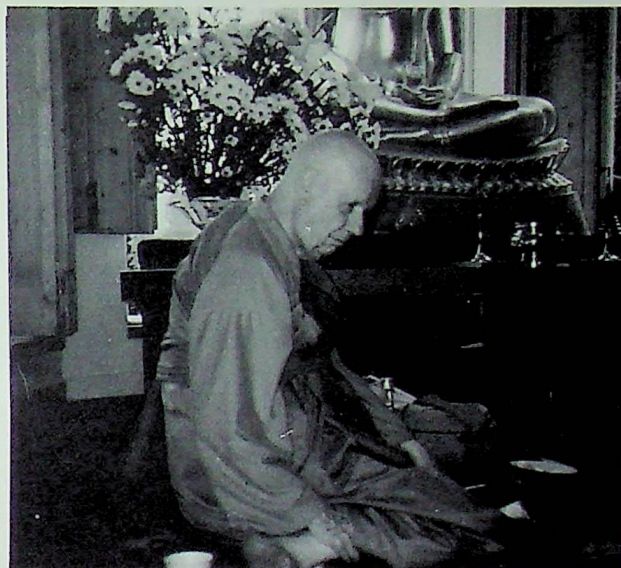
The question is, why should anyone in their right mind adopt such a life? In a Western country, where there is no question of convention or tradition, this can only come from a deep conviction of the truth of the Buddha's message and its applicability to modern Western people.

Evidently, it does make a profound appeal to many. Part of that appeal, for me at least, is its simplicity. It goes to the heart of the matter without demanding assent to seemingly arbitrary credal assumptions. It is also - and this may come as a surprise to some - an active religion of personal effort. The goal of Nibbana (or Nirvana) is not gained by passive acceptance but by active striving. And the Sangha, or order, of monks and nuns provides the most favourable environment for such striving: 'You must make the strenuous effort - the Buddhas point the way'.

When in Germany before the war I noted with glee the words 'The Truth shall Make You Free' on the front of the University of Freiburg - an embarrassing text the Nazis dared not remove. And this Christian phrase, too, gives the key to Buddhism: the effort to be made is to find the truth about oneself - or perhaps I should say, one's non-self.

The illusion of *self* is fed by craving, which is so strong that at death its unexpended force leads to the uprising (or 'rebirth') of an equally spurious but equally real-seeming 'self' in another existence in this world or in another state which may be nicer or nastier than this one. With the perception at a profound level of the unreality of self, the brakes are applied, as it were, and the process of rebecoming gradually but inevitably grinds to a halt. The true purpose of Buddhist meditation is to bring this about, and the ideal environment for working towards this end is a serious and well disciplined monastic community.

It must be admitted that not all Buddhist monasteries - of whatever school - in the East achieve the requisite high standard, but it is a fact well understood by our oriental friends that the monasteries established in Britain are indeed of a very high order. To be accepted into such a community is an honour as well as an obligation. One notable thing about an establishment like Amaravati (the Buddhist Centre at Great Gaddesden, Herts) is the cheerfulness of the 'inmates'. They obviously feel that what they are undertaking is supremely worth while. It would be quite improper to ask any monk or nun whether they have attained any particular stage on



Maurice Walshe

the path (and they wouldn't tell you if you did!), but it can be safely assumed that a few of them at least are fairly advanced. Anyway, the drop-out rate is minimal.

The relation of monks or nuns to the laity is one of symbiosis, as Oriental Buddhists have always understood better than some Western scholars! The Sangha depend totally on the laity for support, without which they could not exist. To support the Sangha is a privilege, and it is equally an obligation of the Sangha to guide the laity in morality and help them on the path to enlightenment: a path which can be trodden by a lay person, though the conditions of monastic life are more conducive to it. As for my life as a monk, short though it was, I was deeply moved to be invited to join the Order and was touched by the loving respect accorded to me, less for myself than for that Order, by lay-supporters both Eastern and Western. I determined to do my level best to live up to their expectations, as honour demanded. It is not for me to say - indeed I can scarcely know - how far I may have succeeded in this. At least I tried. And whatever mental and spiritual effects the life may have had on me, it is a fact that I emerged from the Order physically fitter than I went in! While I cannot put my hand on my heart and say *I enjoyed* every moment of it, I can somehow say *I loved* every moment. ■

Lost in the snow

Joan Encill

Much will have been written about the 75th Birthday celebrations in London on Friday and Saturday, 7 and 8 December, and rightly so, for the festival, with its splendid organisation, was an event long to be remembered.

Our journey home to Birmingham, however, was an event of quite a different character. With three Toc H friends (Joan Davies, Madeline and Fred Figures) I set off at 1.30pm on Saturday, following the inspiring service at St Martin-in-the-Fields. We decided to avoid the M1 motorway in view of the wet road conditions and having heard that four inches of snow had fallen in our home town overnight. Fourteen inches would have been more accurate!

We made tracks towards Aylesbury, stopped for a meal on the way, and went on in the direction of Banbury, where the first evidence of snow sprinkled the fields and trees. Banbury itself looked festive, with coloured lights festooning the lamp standards, and we were 10 miles onwards when another row of coloured lights came into view - the red rear lights of cars, stationary because of a lorry blocking the road ahead. Our troubles had begun!

Managing to turn in several inches of snow, Fred - our intrepid and skilful driver - made an effort to return to Banbury, passing on our way a number of abandoned cars, several of which had nose-dived into the road-side ditch. Yet another queue of cars called a halt to our progress some miles further on, and by now darkness had descended. Long periods of waiting and slow crawling forward eventually brought us onto a road heading towards Coventry. Slowly, slowly we made headway until, just before midnight, we slithered to a halt outside the police station in the centre of Coventry.

What a haven this proved to be, for the friendly and sympathetic night staff did all they could to help. By that time no accommodation was available in the town, but we were invited to stay in the reception area of the station, where a cheerful WPC revived us with hot cups of tea and coffee.

How fortunate that we had a sense of humour which held us in good stead during stiff hours of sitting on narrow slatted seats, on which an icy blast of air struck every time the outer door opened. At 2pm two of us went around to the kebab takeaway for food and cups of tea. Fish and chips and baked potatoes - hot, butter oozing through container and paper bag, and cheese filling, of the plastic variety. Joan commented on the contrast to our refreshments at London's Guildhall in the



Joan Encill (left) with Joan Davies

presence of the Lord Mayor. How we chuckled as our ludicrous situation hit us yet again.

We waited wearily for the dawn and wondered what the day would bring. At 8am a kindly sergeant invited us all to have breakfast in the staff canteen, where a cheerful lady served us an enormous full breakfast, at little cost. At least the inner man was fortified!

The travel news was not encouraging, but we set off at 9.30am. Only another 19 miles or so to Birmingham - but it was 3.15pm before we finally reached an island cluttered with abandoned vehicles, but cleared sufficiently to ease traffic on the spur road to the M6. To our delight there was a clear two-car width of tarmac, and we sped along at 45mph with spirits rising. We could not help being thrilled with the glorious sun-set over Birmingham city, with its tall buildings silhouetted against the sky line. After Joan was safely dropped at her door, it was only a matter of minutes before I reached that wonderful place called home and the enveloping arms of husband and son. Our gratitude to Fred and his skill behind the wheel knew no bounds. Just 27 hours from London to Birmingham!

Had we any weekend regrets? Not one - for the London festivities were something we would never forget, and this winding-up of the year's celebrations with its superb organisation was something we were glad not to have missed, in spite of all the trials of the return journey home.

Joan Encill is a member of Kings Norton & Northfield Branch, Birmingham



BOOK Review

FREEDOM IN EXILE - The autobiography of the Dalai Lama of Tibet

Published by Hodder and Stoughton £16.95.

If I could meet any individual of my choice, I would pick the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Because he comes from a tradition which differs vastly from my own in both culture and intellect, his outlook freshens the mental furniture of my mind. But beyond that, he is one of the great spiritual leaders of the modern world, a contemporary model of wisdom, openness and compassion.

The very existence of the Dalai Lama is extraordinary to Western minds. He is traditionally the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people and he is trained in this role from a very early age. For Tibetan Buddhism believes in reincarnation and teaches that certain human beings, of whom the Dalai Lama is one, can choose the manner of their rebirth. The current, fourteenth, Dalai Lama, was 'discovered' when he was two years old by a search party after it had followed a number of signs which led them to his house in the far north of the country. His parents were small

farmers. The young child appeared to recognise the leader of the search party and called out his name, and he identified a number of objects which had belonged to the previous Dalai Lama. When the search party were certain who he was, he was taken, with his parents, to live in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. A regent ruled until he was 15; meanwhile the young Dalai Lama studied, learned to meditate and played. His account of his early years conveys a cheerful, friendly, bright and mischievous personality. One of the delights of this book is that the Dalai Lama's humility is so genuine and spontaneous that he makes holiness accessible.

His childhood over, the Dalai Lama was thrust straight into drama. In 1950, Tibet was invaded by China. Though horrified, he tried to work with the Chinese authorities. For a long time he trusted Mao, and he was attracted to his ideology (he says he is still 'half Marxist'). But in the end, he had to give up. In 1959 he fled to India, where thousands of Tibetans followed him. He set up a government in exile. 'Freedom in Exile' tells the personal story of this charming man. It also describes the Tibetans' struggle to maintain their culture and identity against terrible odds and it gives an unusual perspective on 20th century politics: the Dalai Lama's relationships with Mao and Nehru make particularly interesting reading. It would have been nice to have had more about his beliefs, but I am told that Tibetan Buddhism is a complicated subject so perhaps that would have unbalanced the book. As it is, it is simple and straightforward in style while touching on profundities. And despite the violence it charts, it leaves behind it an overwhelming sense of hope and peace.

Judith Rice

Assistant Editor of the Catholic weekly, *The Tablet*, and former editor of *Point Three*.

Your Letters

The Editor Does It,
Your Questions,
Letters, Columns,
Books, - P11-12

CONGRATULATIONS ON FEBRUARY POINT THREE

Having been a member of Toc H since 1944 and a regional Staff Padre from 1973 to 1985, I have received a good many *Point three*'s! I am writing to you, as Editor, to congratulate you on your February 1991 edition - it is by far and away the best I have ever received. Every page of it was worth reading and I have read it from cover to cover. I was particularly interested in the article 'Completing the Jigsaw'. The issue is also of personal significance as it is the only one ever to have a picture in it of both my wife (Joan) and myself!

You are doing a good job. Well done.

Rev'd M B 'Polly' Perkins Maidstone, Kent

TUBBY CLAYTON AND GILBERT TALBOT

I would like to congratulate Ken Prideaux-Brune on his two recent contributions to *Point three*. 'Tubby Clayton, the Man behind the Myth', was written with the feeling and knowledge of someone who knew Tubby the person, as Ken undoubtedly did.

Tubby was not without human frailties. I recall the occasion of a Leeds Festival in the City Hall - my wife, myself and two or three other people entered a room where Tubby was 'holding court'. He looked at my wife and said 'You sit over there, I'll deal with you later'. (I don't think he spoke to her again). Whilst he was questioning the rest of us as to where we had come from, someone came in and asked Tubby if he would move to another room, as he was using the Lord Mayor's changing room and His Worship had arrived. 'No' replied Tubby, 'I am in here - he must find somewhere else'!

I don't believe it was Tubby's nature to be discourteous, but in his order of priorities the Founder Padre of Toc H took precedence over Lord Mayors, and he could be very stubborn when he wanted - even if he was in the wrong.

Ken's other article, concerning the book *Gilbert Talbot*, privately published by his mother, especially interested me as I have had one (of the 12 copies published) for 20 years or so. Many years ago I showed it to Tubby. After asking how it came into my possession, which he found strange, he told me that I should go round the second-hand bookshops in Tottenham Court Road. When I pointed out that I did not want to sell the book, he replied 'No, of course you don't, you must find the other 11 copies'. We now know where two of them are!

The following is an extract from a letter written by Gilbert Talbot to his mother before the First World War. I believe the words are as relevant now as they were then, particularly to Toc H.

'The one thing the moderns will not tolerate at any price is a formula which they are expected to take for granted. And they are so right. It is foolish to expect human nature to obey a system of morality and convention for its own sake. What a person does is always eventually determined by their personal relations. The conventions and the system are necessary for the good of society, but nobody will ever keep to them for that reason, especially in any moment of crisis.'

'Therefore the appeal of religion and Christianity must be personal. Christ does not ask that what He lays down as Christian morality should be kept chiefly because it is good in itself, though undoubtedly He does say that too, but primarily because His appeal is to personal attachment and love, which is what will really direct the life of a man or woman.'

'And that is what I believe will be the next development of the moderns. There is chaos at present, and what they search for is something personal'.

Harry Brier Huddersfield

GREAT WAR SERIES

Do not worry about those critics who want to discard the past. Every church and chapel reminds the congregation throughout the service of the past and has done so for nearly 2000 years. If they had not, the essential truths would have veered in any direction and perished.

I know, as a tree lover, that when a tree falls and is uprooted it either dies - or produces suckers!

Kay Hill Thirsk, N Yorks

GOD'S SHOW

There are many men and women now both in the membership and on the staff who are taking Toc H at its word that it was in its origin, and still wishes to be, 'Everyman's Club'. In this sense it IS God's show. He does not discriminate either with natural forces of sun and rain, or with His own grace, whether recognised and acknowledged hesitantly, wholeheartedly, or not at all. (In honesty I have to confess to all three moods from time to time.) I suspect Jack Harrison, being the much loved priest he is (according to my spies a few miles away), would admit to the same moods.

Committed to Jesus of Nazareth, our responsibility now is this: instead of asserting that in Him we have been exclusively given answers to the riddles of our existence, we should be asking the agnostic, the atheist, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, 'What are the central preoccupations of your questions about these riddles?' Listening carefully, we can hope to learn more of the same Jesus who said, 'No man comes to the Father but by me', and 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold'. He also said, 'He that is not against us is for us'.

Why do we, in every generation, fall into the trap of assuming that we fully understand Him and resist the changes that the Holy Spirit would teach us? It may be that it is not our Christian basis that will have to change, but that our understanding of Jesus expand. This has happened before in history, but the development of that argument cannot be added to this letter. I, along with many other members, hope it is being seriously thought about.

Rev'd Bob Knight

Croydon

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

I am grateful to Peter Goozee for his generous comments about my last 'persuasive' letter, and completely agree with him that 'God has no favourites...'. St Peter adds, '...but accepts those from every nation who fear him and do what is right' (Acts 10:34). His love and justice are not exclusive, but are for all.

However, I cannot agree with Peter that discussion of exclusivity and truth are as easy to distinguish as he appears to believe. When Galileo, for example, effectively said to the scientific and religious establishment of his day, 'I have the truth and you are wrong', he was charged with the kind of exclusivity to which both Peter and I object. But he was right and his detractors wrong. His claim to exclusivity was justified. The sin to which we object is not so much exclusivity as pride or conceit, which may or may not be present when exclusive truth claims are made. It is in this light that all should have the opportunity to make what they will of Christ's statement that 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6). Maybe this is the mere blindness and arrogance with which Peter charges Tony Caldwell. Maybe, however, Jesus is right and we need to trust and understand Him as the uniquely complete demonstration and enabler of love and justice across all our barriers. If so, what Christians must surely remember is that it is not we and our 'religion' which are 'the Truth', but Jesus, the Saviour of all, to Whom we are called to bear witness. This distinction is helpfully, and briefly, expanded upon in Christopher Lamb's article 'The Claim to be Unique'* in the excellent and widely available Lion Handbook *The World's Religions* (1988).

David Mayhew

* This article is available to readers from the Editorial Dept—Ed

Newcastle upon Tyne

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

I was listening to the Mystery Voice Competition on the John Dunn show recently. Before asking the lady to guess the name of the voice, John was chatting to her and he found out that she belonged to a concert party that gave productions to help many charities - Toc H among them. This was an honourable mention.

Perhaps we should employ someone full time to ring into these radio stations to answer competitions. The result would be that we would be mentioned regularly on the radio - we might even gain income by the person winning a few bob!!

Jean Whiteman

Haywards Heath

Romania

The plight of the Romanian orphans, the innocent victims of their country's politics, has caught the imagination and compassion of many people. Our first report is from Judy Thomas, a Toc H Project Leader from West Sussex, whose trip was partially sponsored by Toc H members in Surrey and Sussex.

We made it! Twenty six of us got to Romania! A mixed group, which included plumbers, electricians, builders, a carpenter and lots of keen enthusiastic volunteers.

Much of Romania revealed itself to be an incredibly beautiful country. Very rural. Villages of small dwellings made of mud bricks painted in bright cheerful colours. Produce growing all around. Very few cars outside the towns and cities. The pace was much more relaxed, as horses and carts filled the dusty roads instead of impatient and angry vehicles. Ducks, geese and chickens were free to run where they wished with very little fear of being run over.

Obviously, this was not the case in built up areas which were the complete opposite to the scene just described. Concrete monsters looming all around. Long queues weaving down pavements from shops. There were the occasional attractive buildings, reminders from a previous age.

Industrial areas housed all sorts of eyesores, which spurted out vicious-looking fumes and ecologically unsound substances. Huge pipes ran alongside the roads, pollution was clinging to the air.

We stayed at an orphanage in a village setting, Halaucesti. There were actually three orphanages in the same road and many more institutions of various types, in the same area. It was very cosy, since all 26 of us shared the same room. (The snoring at night was amazingly noisy!) No one fell out...great team spirit united us all. Everyone got on famously; it was a big family unit.

Most of our work was at 'Orphanage One', a home to over 60 children all under the age of five. Although 50% of these toddlers are probably HIV positive (maybe even more: tests were taken whilst we were there), they were surprisingly active, boisterous and often quite cheeky. All of them were real fighters.

Painting, plastering, plumbing, wiring...so many tasks needed doing and in such a short amount of time! Language was a bit of a problem. Communicating with children was easy; with the staff it was not quite so straightforward. It was hard to tell if we caused any offence by turning up and 'attacking' their environment which they had been working hard in for many years. But by the time our stay had come to an end it was



Nicolai

obvious that we had done a good thing. Smiles and cuddles all round. The women now had new, plastic covered mattresses in the cots, and the stench was diminishing. Fresh paint grinned down from the walls and happy pictures and murals were all round. The light switches and plugs were safe, instead of loose wires sticking out all over the place. There were nets at the windows to keep out the flies. Two washing machines were plumbed in

and the stock cupboard was full of disinfectant, soap - things they didn't previously have.

I would like to think that we left them a new hope. Certainly, during the last week of our visit they showed a real pride for the place, which I am certain was not just for our benefit. We left them a happier place to work in. Something that was more pleasant for the children too.

The work in Orphanage Two has only just begun. A much bigger building, with many more children, up to the age of six. The last orphanage in the road, full of boys aged six to 16, is just the same as it has always been. There is a lot more work to be done.

All of the volunteers who went out tried to prepare for the worst nightmares imaginable. Where we stayed and visited it was not quite so bad, the babies were not as ill as we thought they would be. We are very aware though that the corrupt country Ceausescu once ruled still remains. There are hundreds of babies and young children who live in vile conditions that we do not know about. Many of these are dying and nearly all of them are totally unloved. Most of them are treated in a way we would never treat animals.

Medical supplies are virtually non-existent. The handicapped are left in the most appalling states and places. The whole situation is unreal and belongs to another world.

We have now come home. The light comes on without problems, we can turn on the tap, we do not have to draw our water from a well. We do not have to queue for a mile or so to put a restricted amount of petrol in our car. We can nip down to the

local shops if we run out of coffee. All of this we take so much for granted. It is easy to come back, but not to forget that it is still all there. One wonders how much of the equipment and supplies we took out still remain and how much has been sold on the black market? The toys we gave to the orphans - are they still there? Are those children we played with, the ones who just wanted hugs and kisses, wondering where we are now? The situation is incredibly difficult.

In my opinion people are the best thing to send out. Medical supplies are also essential, as long as they arrive in the hands of the correct people. A lot of the volunteers are going back in a couple of months time to carry on the work. Our first project was a bit of an experiment. Mistakes were made and a lot was learnt. At least we can say we worked hard and tried our best. The paint on the window frames cannot be stolen, neither can the plaster from the walls or ceilings. The dormitories are painted with jolly pictures that the children can still enjoy, even when we are not there. The wires and plumbing cannot be taken away. Most of our efforts are permanent.

I have left a huge amount unsaid. It is hard to know what to mention and what people are interested in. I want to say 'Thank You' to everyone who helped make that experience possible for me and for the people who support the cause. I felt so humbled by the generosity of everyone I know. A child anywhere in the world is a child.



The orphanage washroom



Paul with our interpreter and orphans

Paul Godley, the Toc H Accountant at BAOR, led a relief party to Romania recently, together with Jane Bridgeman, Development Officer in Berlin. Paul reports:-

Since the Romanian revolution, many of us have become aware of the hardships that Romanians endured under Ceaucescu, particularly the terrible conditions in the orphanages. When Toc H BAOR was asked if we could help in any way, I set about organising a trip taking direct relief into Romania. The Toc H personnel in BAOR advertised for donations of any kind, especially for second-hand clothes, and within two weeks we had sufficient clothing to make a relief trip worthwhile. Together with YWCA BAOR we planned a joint venture with volunteer Jane Bridgeman, our Development Officer in Berlin. Jane also took the opportunity to look into the prospect of any future projects in Romania. Between us we had more than enough items to fill two large transit vans with essential foods, soap and second-hand clothing, kindly donated by BAOR families, and also some items from the local German population. We spent the whole weekend prior to our trip sorting clothes according to groups and gender and in loading the van. Everything had to be listed and documented for customs. We had also been advised to purchase essential items such as toilet paper and drinking water for ourselves.

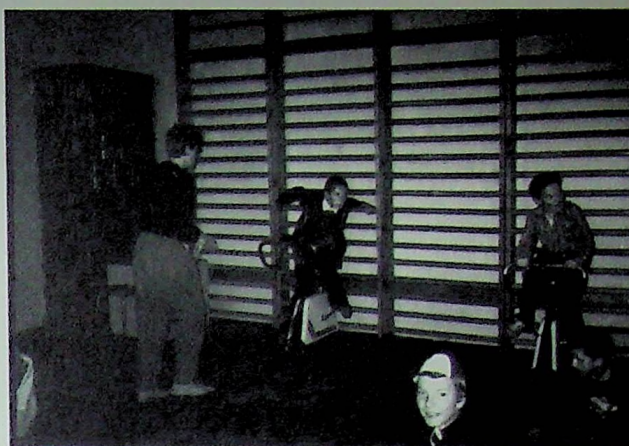
We set out on Monday, 29 October, on the first leg of our 2000 km drive. Jane and I were given a rousing send off by the Toc H staff. Some 14 hours later, just past Vienna, we stopped for the night. It wasn't until after our first change of driver that I realised Jane had never driven such a large van before; but great credit to her, for we managed to arrive without being reduced to gibbering heaps - just!

On Tuesday, 30 October, our first stop was the Hungarian border which, surprisingly, we crossed quickly, despite what we had been led to believe. After passing through Budapest, we carried on to the Romanian border, which was not quite as easy a crossing. It seemed that every individual border guard wanted to inspect our load, and cigarettes were very important to them. In Romania we immediately noticed the vast change in the roads, which had been badly neglected, and the scarcity of petrol: every open garage had queues up to five miles long. After dark, driving became extremely difficult and tense with the absence of street lighting. Horse-and-carts were in common use and were difficult to see, since their only form of lighting appeared to be a candle. After another 15 hours on the road, we eventually arrived in Cluj (the second largest city in Romania) tired and exhausted, wanting only to collapse into our beds.



Jane Bridgeman with orphans

Jane and I met early in the hotel foyer on Wednesday morning. It was then that we noticed it was like stepping back in time; everything seemed drab and dirty. We saw electric trams full to overflowing, more horses and carts than one could imagine and most of the people looked poor and deprived. Only the passing troop carriers reminded us that we hadn't stepped back 60 or 70 years. Breakfast consisted of two small pieces of meat, two slices of grey bread and coffee that none of us could drink. We then met various people who advised us on who was most urgently in need of aid. We had previously agreed to help as many orphanages as possible but it soon became apparent that there were many others who also needed help. After meeting the President of Cluj Handicap Association, who showed us many



Gymnasium of boys orphanage

photographs of handicapped children not in orphanages but who still required aid, we decided to split our van load. Details provided to us showed that, in addition to the orphanages, 1036 severely handicapped children living at home were also in dire need. How we wished we could have taken more. We unloaded half our van at the Handicap Association where it would be sorted and distributed. The lady helpers greeted us with so much warmth and affection, it brought tears to our eyes.

From the Handicap Association we moved on to a boys' orphanage on the outskirts of town. We were overwhelmed by young boys, many suffering from handicaps, leprosy and AIDS. They only wanted to touch us and have their photographs taken. The director of the orphanage showed us how the place had been improved and, although there was no squalor and the children had adequate food, it was still a long way away from western standards. We stayed playing with the children as long as possible before moving on to a girls' orphanage needing immediate relief. After a three hour drive to Bari Mara, and approximately 100 yards from our contact, our van broke down. We unloaded the van onto the YWCA vehicle, which delivered everything to the girls' orphanage, where it was badly needed and gratefully received. It was well past midnight before we had the chance to spend some time with our pleasant and generous contacts.

Thursday morning was spent trying to sort out the van. Although it could be repaired, arrangements had to be made for it to be towed to Budapest where parts could be obtained! Arrangements are now in hand to retrieve the van. We were able to get a lift back from the YWCA, which meant two cold, uncomfortable days of travel in the back of a van. Jane and I felt it had all been worthwhile just to see the joy on the faces of the few we could help.

Jane's and my warmest thanks are extended to all those who contributed to this cause and to all Toc H Staff who helped to collect the numerous donations and deliver them to our office in Herford. We would also like to thank Paula Tope, her daughter and Nikki McDonald for giving up their weekends to help sort, list and document donations.

The images that remain with Jane are those of the small bunch of flowers so humbly given to her by the ladies at the Handicap Association and of the lady we saw doing her washing, up to her knees in a freezing cold filthy river. Also, needless to say, the enormous number of needy people, and the contrast of their poverty and the money spent on building the fine monuments which can be seen in every village and town. The images that remain with me are those of the children who seem to get by on extraordinarily little; the shabbiness and struggle of the people, who remain cheerful, sometimes in the face of a level of deprivation we simply cannot imagine. One image that will remain with me always is that of the little boy who walked past our van two or three times before Jane wound the window down and give him a packet of chewing gum, which was the only thing we had left. He ran away with the broadest smile I have ever seen, only to return a few minutes later to offer Jane a small broken piece of bracelet, which she tactfully refused. His smile restored my faith in mankind.

Throughout this arduous week it was important not to lose a sense of direction or a sense of humour. In this respect Jane was an ideal companion to whom I would like to extend my most grateful thanks, especially for her continuing efforts to be of further help to the Romanian cause. ■

Branch News

Geoffrey Barnes of **Rochdale Toc H** presents a garden seat to Nurse Royle of Springhill Hospice in Rochdale on behalf of Greenbank and Spotland branches. ►

Heinz Mazurek of Wimborne took part in **Southern Region's** sponsored Knit-In and raised £47.93. What about the other men? - you may well ask!! Over £854 was raised from venues across the region. The money is going in their Regional Projects and Extension Fund and will be used to support Project Leaders training and other project and extension work within the Region.

Wolverhampton Branch have honoured the memory of their late secretary, Roy Davey, by donating a trolley - 'The Davey Truck' - to Community Transport, a local group that recycles furniture and household appliances to the needy. Mrs Dorothy Davey presented the gift in memory of her husband, who was a member of Toc H for 50 years. ▼



Paddock Ladies Branch raised £220 in January for the Colsterdale Centre by holding a coffee afternoon at Huddersfield Town Hall.

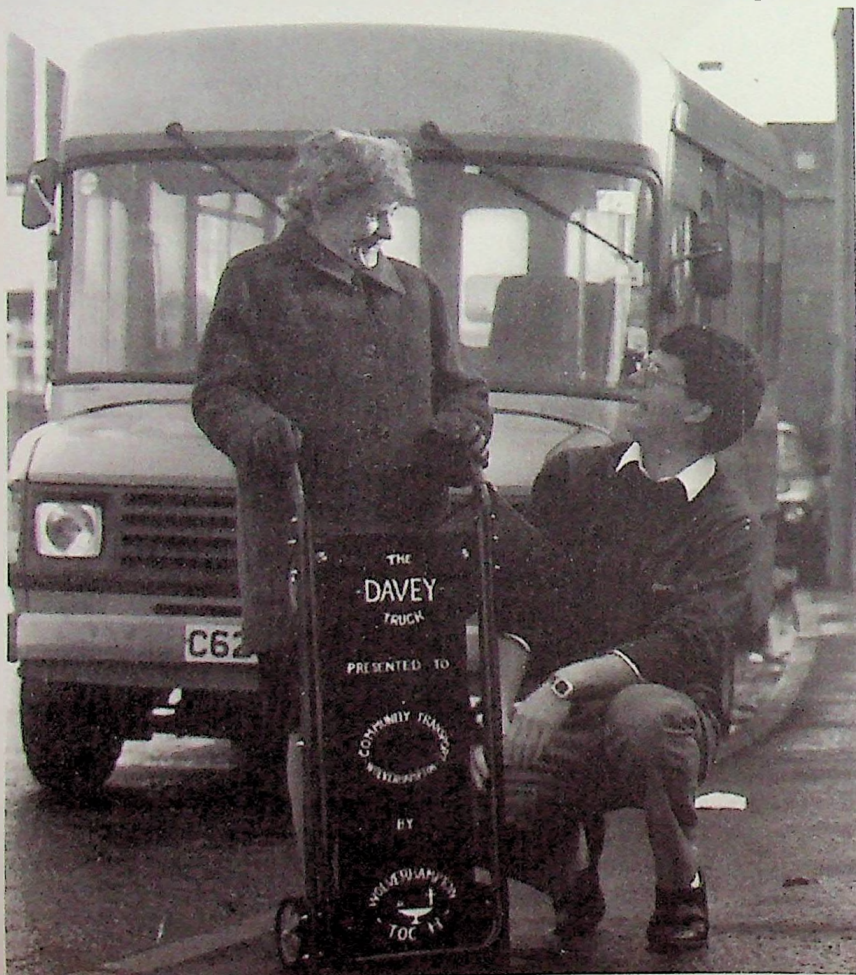
Worthing Men's Branch recently presented £1000 to Carline Funds towards their community alarm system. Toc H members continue to install and maintain their own emergency flashing lamps in homes throughout the Worthing area.

At a regional meeting at **Tadcaster, North Yorkshire**, Staff Development Officer, Jacqueline Bartlett, recently challenged 40 members to produce a collage. 'A real sense of fun and excitement was generated, as well as a commitment to producing something worthwhile that was ours', reports Jackie. Six groups worked separately to produce panels with themes including 'Toc H - the early days', Toc H Womens Association, 'Toc H - a meeting place', Toc H and Young People, Toc H - Headquarters and Toc H - the Future. There was a very successful mixture of age groups involved and the finished result was a splendid 40' x 2'6" banner which has been proudly displayed at headquarters.

Tunbridge Wells East Group has now been granted full branch status. The group was formed two years ago to take the message of Toc H to an area that had never known the movement. From a small beginning the group has grown to 18 members. Many events for both young and old have been held. A sound base has been established for future expansion and the branch is already organising a big publicity drive in the area.

Buckingham Branch were quick off the mark when a large fire destroyed the whole of Buckingham Library, leaving the town void of any lending services. They set up a large bookstall outside the Post Office and the grand total of £56.39 was raised.

Haywain District has received a cheque for £100 from Marjorie Stammers. Marjorie's Toc H branch had to close last year and, as she wanted to do something for the 75th Anniversary celebrations, she organised a car boot sale and coffee morning.



Up Date

WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

The editor and assistant, Jenny Small, joined Mary Edwards, South West Regional Chairman, at a Women's National Commission seminar on Health and Safety of Women in the Workplace, at the Cabinet Office, Whitehall, at the end of January. Speakers were Dame Rachel Waterhouse, the only woman represented on the Health and Safety Commission, and Judith Church, a Trade Union officer with responsibility for Health, Safety and the Environment in her union, and a prospective Parliamentary Labour candidate.

Hazards specific to women at work were covered, ranging from muscular/skeletal problems caused by continual repetitive movements in work such as supermarket checkouts, to the exposure of women of reproductive age to lead and radiation. The exploitation of home workers doing piece work was discussed and the very inadequate child care provision provided in the UK, which seriously restricts the ability of women to work outside the home. This led to a discussion about the greatest problem facing women in the late twentieth century - STRESS. Trying to balance

two jobs, that of earning money as a breadwinner and running a home and looking after a family frequently puts women under enormous pressure. It was pointed out that relatively few mothers work for 'pin money'. The reality is that most women's salary is needed to keep the home going. There are also an enormous number of single parents bringing up families on their own. Judith Church accused the government of ignoring a recent EEC directive about parental leave, as women frequently have to take annual holiday in order to look after a child when it is ill. Other stresses discussed were the lack of sympathy by employers towards pregnancy and the lack of job security that results from child bearing. A main conclusion was that the job market is not geared towards the family.

Reunion of Residents of Tubby Clayton's

former Vicarage at 42 Trinity Square, London

A splendid evening was held at the Athenaeum Club, London on 16 November 1990, when 11 former residents were reunited after nearly 40 years. Professor John Hobbs was in the chair. Others who gathered from many parts of the country to revel in the nostalgia were Paddy Hobbs, Tony and Joyce Manners, John and Sue Woods, Don and Grace McGlashan, Donald and Paula Fraser, Claud and Joan Harris, Roy and Fay Salisbury, Ron and Jean Hooper, Stan Weller.

Tim Wates and Hugh Tunbridge.

Seventeen other former residents of the 1950-60 era also still keep in touch. The next reunion will be in London in November 1992.

Congratulations to Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies

who celebrated her 100th birthday on 24 January. The famous actress is a long-standing Toc H Builder and we greatly appreciate her financial support to the movement over the last 30 years in memory of her only brother, killed in 1916, just before his 21st birthday.



Also to our much-loved Canon Harold Lovell who celebrated his 101st birthday on 6 February with 10 o'clock Eucharist at Essenden Parish Church, Herts, followed by lunch with friends. Harold reassured the editor: 'there will be no high-jinks this year: 1990 nearly killed me!'

Welcome to 8

New Members

The following new members were registered during January

Mrs Peggy Bellamy,

Mrs Margaret C Parkinson,

Mrs Connie Pugh (Higham Ferrers W)

Mrs Margaret A Higgins (Netherall W)

Mrs Dawn M Kerry

(Tunbridge Wells East J)

Miss Enid Davis (Twydal J)

Mrs Barbara E Ward,

Mrs Rosina M Yendell (Wigmore J)

Obituaries

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In December

Roy Butcher (Huddersfield District)

Denis A A Braybrook (Wessex District)

Jack Dimmer (North Walsham)

John H Ellis (Chippenham)

Samuel V Evans (North Bucks with

Oxford District)

Constance F R Palmer

(Hemel Hempstead)

Peter B Park (Selkirk)

Nelson H Parker (Rushden)

Heather A Rowan (Elmstead)

S A 'Peter' Simpson (Lincoln District)

Frederick G Taylor

(Mid Somerset District)

In January

Frank V Tierney (Oatlands)

Mary Pond chairman of Newport (IOW) Women's branch, was tragically killed in a car accident on 19 December 1990. A founder member of Newport Women's branch, she was devoted to Toc H and will be greatly missed. DN

John Arundel ('Peter') Simpson, a member of Lincoln branch, died on 17 December 1990. At one time equerry to Tubby Clayton, and an old and devoted member of Toc H, he found his life work in the Probation Service and became Chief Probation Officer for Leeds and later for Lincolnshire. He served as chairman of the West Yorkshire Executive of Toc H. After retirement, when he was confined to home because of failing health, he offered his house as a meeting place for Lincoln branch, an offer gratefully accepted. JWC

A well loved member of Cheadle Hulme branch, John Norman Walmsley, died on 2 December 1990. He joined Toc H in Blackpool in the 1930s, served in the Army Pay Corps during the war, and joined the Cheadle Hulme branch after his marriage there in 1946. He was particularly active in working for the children's camp at Adlington and will be sadly missed by his many friends. GG

With the death of Peter Danners in September 1990, members of the South West Region have lost a greatly respected and much loved leader. He was a long-serving chairman of the South Western Area and later of the Region. At the same time he remained for over 50 years an active member of Exeter branch. His involvement was interrupted only by service with the Royal Observer Corps, for which he was awarded the M.B.E.

In giving thanks for his life and service, we also remember with gratitude the unfailing support given by his wife Joan. CB

Bishop Cuthbert Bardsley. Cuthbert and I were friends for more than 60 years since our days at Cambridge. In the early 30s we had both been enthusiastic members of Toc H and we were the earliest post-Great War generation of the movement. Tubby Clayton invited us both to be his ADCs at Tower Hill. Cuthbert spent four years as a curate at All Hallows under Tubby and attended my consecration there in 1936. He became a vicar in the East End and helped to establish some of the Toc H Marks and we often met when we were both priests in industrial parishes. Cuthbert was made Suffragan Bishop of Croydon when I was Bishop of Gambia and Rio Tongas in West Africa.

He was Bishop of Coventry for 20 years, overseeing the completion of the new Cathedral and the development of its international ministry of reconciliation.

He married Ellen Mitchell at retirement age and I conducted the marriage service. In retirement he lived in Gloucestershire and took a keen interest in Toc H there. He was a marvellous friendly man.

Bishop John Daly

Ernie Lovett died at Webb House on 29 January, a week after his 76th birthday. Ernie was a great supporter of Cleveland Friendship Circles and Webb House and a founder member of Station Branch. He joined Toc H in 1963 at Brookfield, Middlesbrough. He was greatly respected by all who knew him and was one of those special people who knew how 'to give and not to count the cost'.

RB

Francis Wayne who died on 30 January, was a member of Tayforth District. A Toc H member since 1932, he helped start many branches, including South Paddington. He served as a member of the Finance Committee and was a former Trustee of All Hallows Trust. GWA

We give thanks for their lives

TOC H in association with
The Guild of Pastoral Psychology
invite you to

A REFLECTIVE WEEKEND

at Toc H Cuddesdon House,
Cuddesdon, Oxford

from 6.30 pm Friday 3 May
to 4 pm Sunday 5 May 1991

During the weekend in the company of Rabbi David Freeman and the Revd Alan Johnson, we shall examine various texts and themes from Jewish and Christian perspectives and share worship.

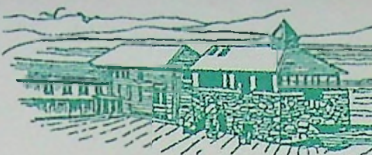
Rabbi David Freeman is a Jungian analyst and past chairman of the Guild. Revd Alan Johnson, apart from being Toc H National Chaplain, is an analytical counsellor and a member of the Guild Council.

Costs for this weekend will be £50 per person, though some limited subsidies are available on request.

Places will be limited, so please apply to Revd Alan Johnson at Headquarters as soon as possible, but by 22 March at the latest, enclosing a non-returnable deposit of £20 per person. (*Please make cheques payable to 'Toc H'*). Preference will be given to those who have not attended before and to trying to ensure a balance of participants.

THE TOC H CENTRE

(on the shores of Snowdonia, Port Penrhyn)



Situated on the Menai Straits surrounded by sea on 3 sides, this centre provides a perfect peaceful setting where you can learn more about yourself and others through leisurely study and energetic outdoor pursuits. Centrally heated, self-catering accommodation for up to 34 people. Easy access to Anglesey and A5

Contact: Toc H, Port Penrhyn, Bangor, North Wales.
Tel: Bangor (0248) 351906
or Penrhyth (024870) 793

INTERNATIONAL PROJECT 1991

An international project is taking place at Poperinge in August 1991.

Work involved will include conservation work on and around the Pool of Peace, work with the War Graves Commission at Hill 60, assisting in the construction of an adventure playground in Poperinge.

Fourteen volunteers from different countries, including the UK, will be living and working together at Talbot House, Poperinge.

Much of the money has already been donated but a further £2000 is needed. Any donations would be much appreciated:

Leslie and Janet Major, 8 Wolversdene Gardens, Andover, Hants SP10 2BB.

CUDDESDON HOUSE

Audio Visual Weekend 12 - 14 April 1991

There are still a limited number of places left on this unique training weekend. Our aim is to produce a video on 'Charing Small Voluntary Groups' which will be available to chairmen of groups within Toc H and outside.

If you have skills to offer, or just want to come along and learn and have fun, do join us.

All costs to be met from Membership Training Budget, although contributions will be welcome.

Further details from: Jacqueline Bartlett, Staff Development Officer,
Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT

A FAITH TO LIVE BY

A PRACTICAL WORKSHOP FOR PILOTS
AND OTHERS

Friday 19 to Sunday 21 April 1991
AT TOC H CUDDESDON HOUSE

Pilots have the task of steering their branch or group through its life by the compass of the Four Points. Their role is a critical one in ensuring the health and purpose of the branch/group.

During this weekend we want to explore the work of the pilot, put together practical ideas and produce a handbook which will then be available to all pilots.

If you would like to join this weekend, please send a cheque for £10 to Revd Alan Johnson at Headquarters.

A WEEK EXPLORING OXFORDSHIRE

Saturday 24 August - Friday 30 August 1991
at CUDDESDON HOUSE

Activities to suit your energies and interest will be:

Walking in the area. Visits to villages. A river trip. Visits to gardens and stately homes. Sampling hostelry. Visit to places of interest in Oxford City.

Join us for all or part of the time

Leaders: Daphne Dawes, John and Mary Edwards

Cost will be £105 for full board and daily transport. A deposit of £20 per person is required to confirm the booking. Cheques payable to Toc H. For further information and booking form contact:

Miss D Dawes, 338 Bath Road, Keynsham, Bristol BS18 1TQ
Tel: 0225 873022

PHOTOS IN POINT THREE

A mandate was passed at Central Council in November that Toc H should demonstrate its commitment to the environment by using recycled paper. The absorbent nature of this paper, plus the fact that the majority of the photographs used in *Point three* are snapshots sent in by contributors, causes the quality to suffer.

POINT THREE FOR THE BLIND

The magazine is now available in tape form for readers who are either blind or partially sighted. Several members have already taken advantage of this excellent facility which is only £3, including postage, for 12 months. Write to: Harry C Bailey, 27 Harrowden Road, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3BG

FRIENDS OF CUDDESDON HOUSE GET TOGETHER

Join us from Monday 6 May to Friday 10 May for a relaxing few days enjoying the company of friends. The cost is £72 per person and bookings should be sent to Anne Evans together with a deposit of £10. More details with receipt of deposit! Balance to be paid on arrival at Cuddesdon.

Early application would be appreciated:

Anne Evans, 29 Newington Way, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 9PS

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point three* Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Hythe, Kent - homely accommodation in member's home. Bed/breakfast and/or evening meal or full board, very reasonable rates. Enquire Nesta Cock, 7 Tounmay Close, Lympne, Hythe, Kent CT12 4LL. Tel: 0303 269407